

Message Text

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ADP092

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ACTION ARA-14

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CIAE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 DODE-00 SNM-05 SY-05 /060 W

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R 211620Z JAN 78

FM AMEMBASSY BOGOTA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5904

S E C R E T SECTION 2 OF 2 BOGOTA 06588 HELD FORTH AT SOME LENGTH CONCERNING HIS

STANDS ON CORRUPTION, LAW AND ORDER, AND NARCOTICS TRAFFICKING AND COMMITTED HIMSELF SPECIFICALLY TO CLOSE COLLABORATION AND COOPERATION WITH THE U.S. IN NARCOTICS INTERDICTION.

4. TURBAY THEN COMMENTED ON THE ASSOCIATIONS OF HIS OPPONENT, CARLOS LLERAS. HE CITED A TRIP BY LLERAS TO SANTA MARTA, AN AREA KNOWN AS A FOCAL POINT OF DRUG TRAFFICKING. LLERAS IS SAID TO HAVE ADDRESSED HIS SUPPORTERS FROM A BALCONY IN THE COMPANY OF ULVEDA PIETRI, THE WELL-KNOWN MISTRESS OF A NOTORIOUS TRAFFICKER WHOSE PSEUDONYM IS "CAPTAIN BLACK". HE SAID THAT LLERAS' CONGRESSIONAL LIST FOR THE FEBRUARY PSEUDO-PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS IN THE GUAJIRA, AN AREA WELL-KNOWN FOR ITS LAWLESSNESS AND AS A SOURCE OF MARIJUANA WAS LED BY MIGUEL PINEDA BARRIOS, THE SCION OF THE MOST NOTORIOUS TRAFFICKING FAMILY IN THE AREA. WE HAD RECEIVED THIS PARTICULAR REPORT FROM ANOTHER SOURCE AND WERE TOLD THAT THIS WAS THE PRINCIPAL REASON FOR THE INCLUSION IN PRESIDENT LOPEZ' NEW YEAR SPEECH OF REMARKS TO THE EFFECT THAT NONE OF THE CANDIDATES COULD PRESUME TO HAVE IMPECABLE RECORDS WITH REGARD TO ASSOCIATIONS (BOGOTA 0128). TURBAY STATED THAT ONE OF LLERAS' CLOSEST ASSOCIATES AND KEY FUND RAISERS IS FORMER CONSUL GENERAL IN NEW YORK, GUSTAVO GAVIRIA GONZALEZ. GAVIRIA, HE SAID, IS UNABLE

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TO OBTAIN A U.S. VISA TO OPERATE HIS COFFEE IMPORT FIRM IN NEW YORK BECAUSE OF HIS ILLEGAL ACTIVITIES. ONE OF CARLOS LLERAS' SONS IS THE NEW YORK MANAGER FOR THE FIRM. WE HAVE IN FACT DENIED GAVIRIA A VISA

SINCE WE HAVE REASON TO BELIEVE HE HAS ENGAGED IN NARCOTICS TRAFFICKING (76DEA28937) AND HE IS KNOWN TO BE AN IMPORTANT LLERAS FUND RAISER. WE CANNOT CONFIRM WHETHER LLERAS' SON MANAGES GAVIRIA'S BUSINESS IN NEW YORK.

5. IT WOULD BE EASY TO CONCLUDE FROM THE ABOVE THAT PERHAPS BOTH GENTLEMEN ARE CROOKS AND THAT WE WOULD BE IN TROUBLE NO MATTER WHO WINS. IT SEEMS MORE LIKELY, HOWEVER, THAT THE SOCIAL AND POLITICAL MILIEU OF COLOMBIA HAS DEVELOPED TO A POINT THAT IT IS VITALLY IMPOSSIBLE TO ORGANIZE A POLITICAL GROUP THAT WOULD NOT CONTAIN ELEMENTS ASSOCIATED WITH TRAFFICKERS. THIS IS NOT NECESSARILY ALL BAD. THE FACT THAT TRAFFICKERS HAVE ENORMOUS LIQUIDITY AND ARE BECOMING ACTIVE POLITICALLY (THE MAYOR OF BOGOTA GAVE ME HIS ESTIMATE THAT THE NEXT LEGISLATURE WILL HAVE AT LEAST 10 DEPUTIES WHO WILL BE BEHOLDEN DIRECTLY TO TRAFFICKERS) IS SCARING ANY NUMBER OF TRADITIONAL POLITICIANS. I AM CONVINCED THAT THIS FACTOR AND THE POTENTIAL CHALLENGE TO THE AUTHORITY OF THE TRADITIONAL RULING ELITE ARE THE SINGLE MOST IMPORTANT ELEMENTS IN THE GROWING CONCERN WITH REGARD TO THE TRAFFIC AND THE INCREASING COOPERATION WE ARE RECEIVING IN ITS INTERDICTION.

6. TURBAY IS LIKELY TO BE COLOMBIA'S NEXT PRESIDENT AND I BELIEVE IT IS ESSENTIAL TO INCLUDE THAT FACTOR IN OUR PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE IN ORDER TO MAKE THE BEST OF IT. HE IS CLEARLY SENSITIVE TO THE WHISPERED

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ACCUSTATION THAT HE IS THE CANDIDATE OF THE DRUG TRAFFICKERS. ASSUMING EVEN A RELATIVE HOESTY ON HIS PART, THIS SENSITIVITY WILL BE TO OUR ADVANTAGE IN ACHIEVING GREATER GOC COOPERATION AGAINST TRAFFICKING, IF HE SHOULD BE ELECTED. I AM PRESENTLY INCLINED TO BELIEVE THAT HE IS BASICALLY A SOUND INDIVIDUAL, FUNCTIONING PRAGMATICALLY IN A CORRUPT MILIEU. HIS OBSERVATIONS CONCERNING THE LLERAS WHISPER CAMPAIGN APPEAR TO HAVE THE RING OF TRUTH. I INTEND TO MEET FURTHER WITH TURBAY IN ORDER TO FURTHER SOLIDIFY HIS COMMITMENT TO A COMPREHENSIVE NARCOTICS INTERDICTION PROGRAM. ASECIO

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